

Loop 303 works begins next week

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Construction of a new stretch of Loop 303 between Happy Valley Parkway and Lake Pleasant Parkway in the northwest Valley will begin next week, marking the start of the first new freeway project approved by Valley voters in 2004.

The Arizona Department of Transportation will build an interim four-lane divided segment of Loop 303, including construction of new interchanges at Happy Valley, Lone Mountain and Lake Pleasant parkways. Completion of the \$101 million project is scheduled by 2012.

Under the Regional Transportation Plan, future projects will improve Loop 303 into a six-lane freeway with planned additional interchanges.

Loop 303 has been a long-planned corridor serving the northwest Valley. It was removed from a 1980s freeway plan for lack of funding. When complete, Loop 303 will serve as a continuous 36-mile roadway connecting I-10 in the West Valley to I-17 in the North Valley.

While ADOT already has been building a number of voter-approved projects to improve existing freeways, the Loop 303 Happy Valley to Lake Pleasant Parkway segment is the first all-new freeway project to be constructed as part of the RTP.

Drivers in the area should not encounter significant traffic issues during construction, since the alignment of Loop 303 between Happy Valley and Lake Pleasant parkways is primarily located on undeveloped state land. Local residents can sign up for ADOT's Loop 303 mailing list at www.ValleyFreeways.com to receive e-mail alerts about significant construction activities, including closures or restrictions. The project hotline is 480-890-3055.

To help keep traffic moving along Happy Valley Parkway, crews will construct a temporary detour and shift the parkway slightly to the south within the Loop 303 work zone. The traffic shift - being done in coordination with the City of Peoria - is expected to start in late February and be in place for approximately one year.

The detour will include three-way stop signs requiring drivers to stop when making a left turn entering or exiting the existing Loop 303, or traveling eastbound on Happy Valley Parkway. Westbound Happy Valley Parkway will have two lanes, with the right lane used for through traffic and the left lane used for left turns or optional through movements. Drivers are urged to use caution in the new work zone.

A second project to construct a new interim four-lane section of Loop 303 from Lake Pleasant Parkway to Interstate 17 is expected to break ground by mid-2009 and also be completed in 2012. Some preparations for this connection are already being built as part of the massive I-17 reconstruction project between Loop 101 and Carefree Highway.